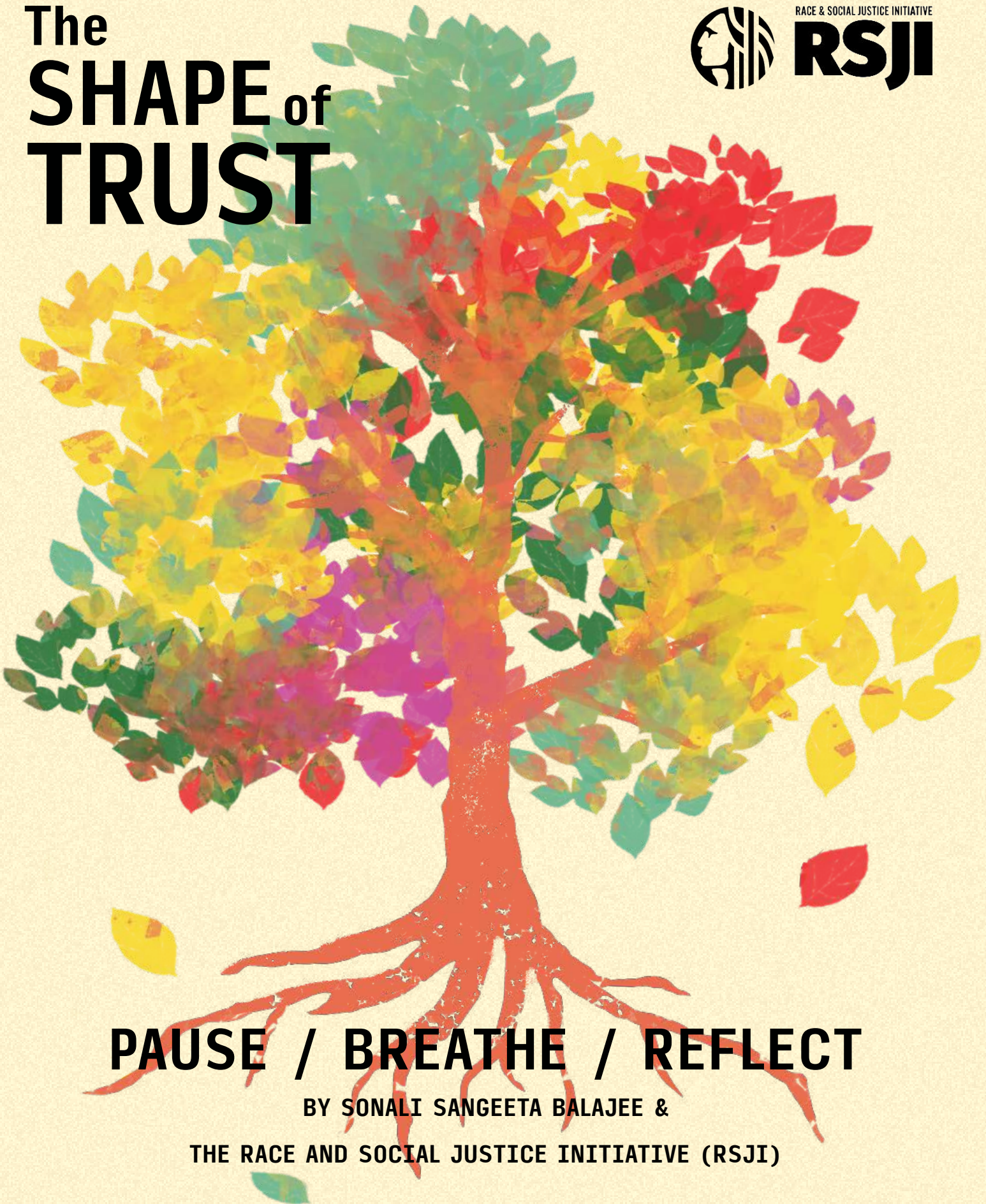


# The **SHAPE** of **TRUST**



RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

**RSJI**



**PAUSE / BREATHE / REFLECT**

BY SONALI SANGEETA BALAJEE &

THE RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE (RSJI)



# WHAT

A moment to pause, breathe, and reflect to create a place of stillness where we are better able to receive new information and restore ourselves. At the end of Scene 1, Story 2 in *The Shape of Trust*, the characters pause, take a collective breath, and sigh. It is an act of mutual care. Before you move on to discussions or activities for Scene 1, Story 2 — or any scene and story in the video — join the characters in a pause and take a deep breath.

The [Bodhi Frame](#) guidepost of Bestill asks us to consider “How we center, pause, reflect, rest, spend time with other living systems”. Bestill is about receiving and restoring: “Bodhi knows that we are better able to receive multiple forms of knowledge and experience when in a place of stillness. Receptive states are also better for our health and are furthered by fostering reflective spaces in our minds, with each other, in our workplaces, and within nature. All living systems depend on collectively caring strategies and structures to restore greater harmony and balance.”

This activity can be adapted for live, virtual learning.

## Number of Participants

**5-60.** This activity works well in groups of different sizes and will require more time for larger groups.

## Time

**5-20 minutes.** Timing for each step is flexible, based on the needs of the group and overall facilitation plan. Some suggestions are provided. Total time will depend on format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid), number of participants, and other factors such as where you want to focus learning and for how long. We expect that experienced facilitators will know how to adjust and limit time as needed.

This Activity Spotlight is a component of The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide by the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). For information on the facilitation experience recommended for those using the Guide, a glossary of terms, and tips to support collective health, wellbeing, and belonging – in particular of BIPOC – please download the Guide from the RSJI website.

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## Participants will:

Cultivate receiving and restoration through the practice of pausing and breathing (the Bodhi Frame guidepost of Bestill).

Experience the benefits of slowing down and connecting to body and breath in moments of tension, conflict, or strong emotion. This can also interrupt unconscious behaviors that perpetuate racism, sexism, or other forms of oppression.



# Participant Preparation

Participants do not need to prepare or bring any materials.

## Facilitation Materials

- The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide, “Glossary”.

## HOW IT WORKS

### EXPLAIN / BREATHE (2 min)

Before you begin, let participants know that they are at choice: Some may have reasons why engaging in a guided meditation does not feel supportive and may even be harmful. For a few healing and trauma-informed considerations, see the section in The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide titled “Before you facilitate a grounding or centering activity”.

Invite participants to pause and check in with their breath. Notice without judgement its rhythm and depth, any ease or tension, and any places where it gets stuck. Let participants know that our minds are often distracted, thinking many thoughts. This is natural and normal. The goal is to notice our thoughts. To support this, participants might say “thinking” to themselves and visualize their thoughts flowing by in a river.

### BREATHE / SHARE / REFLECT (5 min)

Guide participants in 3–4 collective breaths and invite them to vocalize the exhale. They might sigh, shout, add a patterned sound, or anything that feels natural coming from their bodies. You might also try inviting them to do counting breaths. For example: inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, and exhale for 6–8 counts. (This is sometimes referred to as Box Breathing.)

Pose these reflective questions to the group to open up a discussion that deepens learning:

- What are your practices for re-centering yourself, even in the most tense of moments throughout your workday, and especially when you are experiencing racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression?

- How do you already use centering, pausing, reflecting, resting, and spending time with other living systems to support you in moments when you experience harm, feel challenged, or are struggling?
- How can you use centering, pausing, reflecting, resting, and spending time with other living systems to strengthen your muscles for interrupting racism, sexism, or other forms of oppression, including what you yourself may be unconsciously or inadvertently perpetuating?

After the experience, ask participants to share how they feel. In-person groups can go through a few shares out loud. Online groups can share in the chat. (Give people time to read the chat. You may even narrate the chat as the comments are coming in.)